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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 005579

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE
NSC FOR HARRIMAN
OSD FOR KIMMITT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/PANJSHIR: ATTEMPTED SUICIDE ATTACK SPARKS ALERT

REF: KABUL 5549

Classified By: POLCounselor SRosenberry for reasons 1.4 (A) and (B)

Summary

¶1. (C) Governor Bahlul of Panjshir credits alert civilians with foiling the November 15 attempt of a terrorist to launch a suicide attack in the valley. According to the Governor, the Pashtun terrorist could get no further than Golbahar, outside the valley, where he blew himself up. The Governor remains concerned other terrorists will try to enter the valley, perhaps disguised as workers for foreign contractors. Working with local authorities, the PRT has taken a series of security precautions. End Summary.

Governor Acts on Actionable Intel

¶2. (C) Panjshir Governor Bahlul used a November 19 meeting with PRT representatives to provide information on a November 15 attempted suicide attack, foiled in Golbahar, just outside the mouth of the Panjshir Valley in Parwan Province. The Governor informed us that on November 9 he had received two reports, from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and National Security Service (NDS), warning that al Qaeda and Taliban had recruited, equipped and instructed ten to twenty individuals to carry out suicide attacks against &selected important targets8 in Kabul and the Panjshir area.

¶3. (C) Based on this intelligence, the Governor had taken several actions. He alerted his own guard force and the local ANP and NDS. He instituted close checks at the Lion's Gate at the mouth of the Panjshir Valley. He addressed congregations in Panjshir mosques to inform them of the threat. And he appealed to Panjshiris to report on suspicious individuals and refuse them rides. On November 15, the day of the suicide attack, he also coordinated with the PRT on security measures.

Security Designs

¶4. (C) The Golbahar incident, the Governor said, pointed to the efficacy of these measures and of Panjshir's security system. The terrorist had been unable to catch a ride into the valley, despite repeated attempts, and ended up killing himself. The Governor had traveled to Golbahar immediately after the suicide to learn first-hand the circumstances of the attack. According to the Governor, eyewitnesses said the individual had been a male Pashtun, bearded, unwashed, trembling and bewildered. These characteristics had engendered suspicion among the Panjshiri taxi drivers whom he approached unsuccessfully for a ride. &Ultimately,⁸ the Governor summed up, &the security of Panjshir rests with the people of Panjshir.⁸

¶5. (C) The Governor shared that the MOI and NDS reports indicated that additional suicide attackers may be headed to Panjshir. He expressed concern that a terrorist disguised as a worker for a foreign contractor might be able to penetrate the valley.

¶6. (C) On November 20, the Governor addressed the monthly session of the Provincial Development Council and singled out security as his most serious responsibility. He warned the assembly, numbering close to one hundred and including several PRT representatives, of suicide attacks. He called on the Panjshiris to be on high alert and appealed to their mujahideen identity and Islamic faith to preserve security in the valley.

Comment

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¶7. (C) The Golbahar incident profiles the effectiveness of an activist Governor becoming personally involved in security issues. It illustrated the strengths of a security system rooted in the close-knit society of Panjshir, but it also highlighted the possibility of the Taliban trying exploit the privileged access enjoyed by the international community and contractors to gain entry to the valley. The PRT heightened its security following the incident and maintained a low profile over the Thanksgiving weekend. We briefed the UNOPS security chief at the USAID-funded road company, who instructed his guard force to take precautionary measures. We will continue to work closely with the Governor.

¶8. (SBU) CFC-A Comment: There have been similar efforts and successes in other provinces. In Khost (reftel), the Provincial Coordination Center (PCC) is directly involved in coordinating the responses of the Afghan Border Police, Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, Afghan Security Services (NDS), U.S. forces, and the PRT to intelligence relating to all forms of IEDs, including intended suicide attacks. This has reduced casualties and increased public confidence in the government's ability to provide security.

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